

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L GUAYAQUIL 1587

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PFOR EC

SUBJECT: GUAYAQUIL INDEPENDENCE DAY - THE PRESIDENT SPEAKS

REF: QUITO 7519

1. GUAYAQUIL CELEBRATED ON OCTOBER 9 ITS 155TH INDEPENDENCE DAY, AND SINCE THIS INDEPENDENCE ANTEDATED THE INDEPENDENCE OF ECUADOR AS A WHOLE, IT IS IMPORTANT TO THE NATION AS A WHOLE AND IS CELEBRATED AS A NATIONAL HOLIDAY. THE DAY COMMENCED IN THE CENTER OF THE CITY WITH A UNIFIED PARADE OF MILITARY UNITS - INCLUDING THE CADETS OF THE SERVICE ACADEMIES - SCHOOLS, AND SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS AND LASTED FROM 10 A.M. TO 4:45 P.M. THE AIR FORCE SHOWED ITS MIGHT WITH REPEATED OVERFLIGHTS OF 4 CANBERRAS AND SIX JET FIGHTERS AS WELL AS HELICOPTER UNITS. THE DAYTIME FESTIVITIES WERE MARRED WITH THREE SEPARATE INCIDENTS THAT CAUSED SOME PANIC, BUT ORDER WAS QUICKLY RESTORED AND THE PARADE CONTINUED. A TEAR GAS BOMB WAS RELEASED AND THE GAS SPREAD OVER THE CROWD INCLUDING THE PRESIDENT; A NOISE BOMB EXPLODED, AND A SECTION OF THE BLEACHERS STARTED TO COLLAPSE. NONE OF THE INCIDENTS WAS CONSIDERED LOCALLY TO BE SERIOUS OR MORE THAN MINOR HARASSMENT. PEOPLE WERE SOMEWHAT JITTERY BECAUSE THE RUMORS OF VIOLENCE THAT SEEMED TO ABOUND.

IT IS BELIEVED THAT A LOCAL POLICEMAN INADVERTENTLY RELEASED THE TEAR GAS GRENADE WHILE FIDDLING WITH IT IN HIS BOREDOM.

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2. THE PRESIDENT AT A FORMAL SESSION IN THE CITY HALL IN THE EVENING CONTINUED THE IMPASSIONED PLEA HE HAS BEEN MAKING ON THIS SERIES OF ONE DAY STANDS IN THE COASTAL AREA FOR NATIONAL UNITY AND SUPPORT OF THE ARMED FORCES GOVERNMENT AND THE PROGRAM IT STARTED IN FEBRUARY 1972. AFTER A FIFTEEN MINUTE HISTORY LESSON, THE PRESIDENT SPENT THE NEXT HALF HOUR EXTOLLING THE ARMED FORCES AND OUTLINED THEIR SERVICE TO THE PEOPLE OF ECUADOR, GIVING PARTICULAR PRAISE TO THE AIR FORCE AND NAVY. THE MEETING WAS WELL ATTENDED BY THE PRESS, AND THE PRESIDENT TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE THE PRESS TO TASK FOR TENDENTIOUS REPORTING AND RUMOR MONGERING, REMINDING THEM THAT THE INTERESTS OF THE NATION ARE NOT SERVED THEREBY. HE FURTHER EXCORIATED THE CIVILIAN POLITICAL PARTY GROUPS WHO ARE TRYING TO RAISE UP SUPPORT FOR THE HANDING OVER OF MILITARY RULE TO CIVILIAN GROUPS BY PAYING TRIBUTE TO SOME CIVILIAN LEADERS. WITH GREAT SCORN IN HIS VOICE, HE ADDED "AND NONE IS FROM THE MASSES." HE WAS OBVIOUSLY REFERRING TO THE RECENT TRIBUTES IN QUITO AND GUAYAQUIL TO GALLO PLAZA. THE ARMED FORCES, HE SAID, THOUGH IT BELIEVES IN DEMOCRACY, WILL NOT TURN OVER THE REINS OF GOVERNMENT UNTIL ITS FEBRUARY 1972 PROGRAM IS COMPLETED.

3. DURING THE REMAINDER OF THE DOG AND PONY SHOW, THE PRESIDENT, THE MAYOR, MEMBERS OF THE CABINET, THE GOVERNOR AND OTHER DIGNITARIES HANDED OUT CIVIC AWARDS REMINISCENT OF THE "QUEENS BIRTHDAY HONORS LIST." ALSO GREAT SHOW WAS MADE OF THE SIGNING OF CONTRACTS FOR COMMUNITY IMPORVEMENTS SUCH AS STREET LIGHTING, POWER GENERATION AND STREET IMPROVEMENTS. THIS WOULD ALL APPEAR TO HAVE THE EFFECT OF SHOWING THE PEOPLE OF GUAYAQUIL THAT THE QUITO GOVERNMENT IS NOT ALL BAD AND IS NOT KEEPING THE LION'S SHARE OF THE STATE REVENUES OUT OF THE COASTAL AREA FROM WHENCE THEY WERE DERIVED.

4. THIS CONSULATE GENERAL IS NOT VERY SANGUINE ABOUT THE PRESIDENT'S CHANCES OF SUCCEEDING IN HIS ATTEMPTS TO PACIFY AND MOLIFY THE COSTENOS. THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY IS PLEASED WITH SOME OF THE APPOINTMENTS SUCH AS DANILO CARRERA BUT WONDERS HOW LONG HE AND SOME OF THE NEW CHANGES WILL LAST. THE SHOW OF SPENDING IN THE NON-MILITARY SECTOR AS MENTIONED ABOVE IS RECOGNIZED AS ONLY A BIT OF FROSTING AND NOT A BASIS FOR GETTING TO THE HEART OF THE ECONOMIC PLIGHT. THE PRESIDENT'S EXCORIATION OF THE PRESS MENTIONED ABOVE DID NOT PREVENT HIM FROM ATTENDING A DINNER PARTY GIVEN AFTER THE CITY HALL SHOW BY CARLOS PEREZ PERASSO, DIRECTOR
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OF "EL UNIVERSO" ONE OF ECUADOR'S BEST NEWSPAPERS. PEREZ WAS EARLIER GIVEN ONE OF THE CITY'S CIVIC AWARDS FOR PUBLIC SERVICE. THE PARTY WAS GIVEN IN THE GARDEN AND THE PRESIDENT WAS HEARD TO REPLY TO A GUEST WHO HOPED THERE WERE NO SNAKES IN THE GARDEN "THERE IS NONE IN THIS GARDEN, BUT IN OTHER GARDENS OF THIS CITY THERE ARE*"
BISHTON

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